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Essential Pregnancy Nutrients - Iron

Eating a varied and balanced diet during pregnancy is very important for both you and your baby. Pregnancy nutrition is a big topic but getting started is easy - use the table below to familiarise yourself with essential nutrients and vitamins to include in your pregnancy diet and learn about the benefits for you and your baby.

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So what do you need to eat for you and your baby – and why?

Nutrient	Iron
Why do you and your baby need it?	Iron contributes to the normal formation of red blood cells and helps to bring essential oxygen to your body's cells and to those of your baby.
Eat it so you can...	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduce the risk of developing anaemia which causes you to feel tired and breathless;• Help with normal energy production to help avoid fatigue;• Support your immune system;• Support brain development in your growing baby.
How much is enough?	<p>You need 27 mg/day during pregnancy.</p> <p>Good sources of iron include meat (especially red meat which is higher in iron than chicken and fish), egg yolks, legumes and nuts, leafy green vegetables and iron enriched cereals.</p> <p>The iron found in animal food sources like red meat is easier to absorb whereas the iron found in plant sources like vegetables is less easily absorbed. When you are eating these plant sources of iron, adding vitamin C to the meal can help with the absorption of iron.</p>

- Include lean meats (especially red meats) at lunch and dinner.
- Choose green leafy vegetables.
- Choose wholegrain breads and cereals as they are higher in iron.
- Include legumes (dried beans, peas and lentils) in dishes like casseroles and soups.
- Yeast.
- Wheat germ.
- Roast beef.
- Cooked lentils.

On your plate

-
- If you are a vegetarian or vegan, you may want to discuss this with your healthcare professional as you may need additional supplementation if you are not getting what you and your baby need through your diet;
 - To boost iron absorption, consume some vitamin C at the same meal. Fruits and vegetables that are good sources of vitamin C include oranges, kiwifruit and green leafy vegetables;
 - Tea and coffee interfere with iron absorption. Limit how much you drink especially around meal times;
 - Sprinkle salads and raw vegetables with yeast or wheat germ (1 tsp yeast provides an extra 2mg iron and 2Tbsp wheat germ provides an extra 1mg);

Tips

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